Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of <u>reducing bandwidth requirements in an on-line chat system</u> ~~voice-to-text reduction for real-time messaging~~, comprising the steps of:

receiving a speech input from a calling party;

transcribing the speech input to a text message in a same language as the speech input;

converting the text message to an alternative text message in a same language as the received text message based upon at least one of a calling party profile and a called party profile, wherein at least one of said profiles specifies replacing at least a portion of the text message with an alternative text portion having a same meaning as the replaced portion of the text message, the alternative text portion having a shorter length than the replaced portion of the text message;

performing data compression to compress the alternative text message prior to transmitting the alternative text message as a data stream defining a text stream;

transmitting the text stream to [[a]] <u>the</u> called party;

receiving the alternative text message by the called party as the text stream; and

~~rendering~~ <u>displaying</u> the alternative text message <u>and/or converting the alternative text message into a speech output</u> at the called party substantially in real-time.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of sending a voice signature of the calling party to the called party.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of maintaining a voice signature repository of the calling party for access by a called party of a voice signature of the calling party when receiving a call from the calling party.

4.   (Cancelled).

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the ~~step of rendering comprises the step of converting the~~ alternative text message is converted at the called party to [[a]] the speech output by using text-to-speech conversion in conjunction with the voice signature of the calling party.

6.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of translating the alternative text message to another language to provide a translated alternative text message.

7.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the step of transmitting comprises the step of transmitting the translated alternative text message.

8.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the step of translating the alternative text message occurs in a server on a network coupled between the calling party and the called party.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein ~~the step of rendering comprises the step of converting~~ the translated alternative text message is converted at the called party to [[a]] the speech output by using text-to-speech synthesis in conjunction with the voice signature of the calling party.

10.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 6, ~~wherein the step of rendering comprises the step of converting the alternative text message at the called party to a speech output by using text-to-speech conversion, and~~ wherein the method further comprises:

adding the translated alternative text message to the data stream; and

displaying the translated alternative text message in the called party's location substantially in real-time.

11-21. (Cancelled).

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